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Department for Children and Families
Commissioner's Office
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(802) 241-1942
dcf.vermont.gov

June 21, 2010

Dear School Administrators,

On February 27, 2009, the Vermont Senate and House passed S.13 - AN ACT RELATING TO IMPROVING VERMONT'S SEXUAL ABUSE RESPONSE SYSTEM. Signed into law on March 17, 2009, its legislative intent is to increase child sexual abuse prevention efforts, enhance the investigation and prosecution of child sexual abuse, and improve the supervision of sex offenders.

The act (known as *Act One*) includes several new mandates for Vermont schools. This letter specifically addresses sections 3 and 9, which require schools to educate both children and employees about child sexual abuse. These sections also require the Department of Education (DOE) and the Department for Children and Families (DCF) to help schools meet their statutory requirements. The following charts outline what is required of schools, what is required of DOE and DCF, what materials and support you can expect to receive and when, and who to contact for more information or to receive materials sooner.

Section 3: Educating children about sexual abuse and sexual violence.

REQUIRED OF SCHOOLS

Requires Vermont schools to include instruction about how to recognize and prevent sexual abuse and sexual violence in comprehensive health education.

Effective: July 1, 2011.

REQUIRED OF DOE AND DCF

Requires DOE and DCF to convene a working group to prepare technical assistance materials to help school districts and supervisory unions create and implement developmentally appropriate instructional programs.

The working group has developed a Technical Assistance Resource Guide (TARG) to help schools meet this mandate. It provides best practice recommendations for school-wide, community approach to prevention. The TARG will be distributed to all schools (on DVD) this fall. It will also be available starting July 1st on the DOE Web site and upon request.

Contact: Donna McAllister, DOE, at (802) 828-1636 or donna.mcallister@state.vt.us.

Section 9: Educating staff and volunteers about child sexual abuse.

REQUIRED OF SCHOOLS	REQUIRED OF DOE AND DCF
<p>Requires school boards to ensure that adults employed in schools in their districts receive orientation on the prevention, identification, and reporting of child sexual abuse and sexual violence.</p> <p>It also requires school boards to provide opportunities for parents, guardians, and other interested persons to receive the same information.</p> <p>Effective: July 1, 2011.</p>	<p>Requires DOE and DCF (Agency of Human Services) to provide materials and technical support to school boards.</p> <p>DCF commissioned a special Vermont edition of the Canadian Center for Child Protection's <i>Commit to Kids</i> program—a program that helps child-serving organizations to create safe environments for children. The program includes a workbook, training video and reproducible forms. Chapter 2 of the workbook, along with the training video, provides a detailed orientation to child sexual abuse, while chapters 3 through 8 will help schools move beyond awareness to organizational change that helps keep children safe. Chapter 7 includes information about reporting child abuse in Vermont and should be included in employee orientation. Additionally, in-person mandatory reporter training is available through local DCF, Family Services District Offices. For a list of offices go to dcf.vermont.gov/fsd/contact_us.</p> <p>The <i>Commit to Kids</i> program will be distributed to all schools (on DVD) this fall. Technical assistance to implement the program will be available upon request. DCF is also producing outreach materials that schools can use to educate parents and other adults (e.g., a rack card and parent's guide). Materials can be ordered from the contact below. Schools can also refer parents to a new prevention Web site: protectkids.vt.gov.</p> <p>Contact: Priscilla White, DCF, at (802) 241-1942 or priscilla.white@ahs.state.vt.us.</p>

Please make sure the appropriate personnel in your district are aware of these materials and that your schools are “stepping up” to prevent child sexual abuse. If you would like more information about *Act One*, you can view it online at <http://www.leg.state.vt.us/docs/2010/Acts/ACT001.pdf>.

Thank you for the work you do with Vermont's children.

Sincerely,



Stephen R. Dale, Commissioner
Department for Children & Families



Armando Vilaseca, Commissioner
Department of Education